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THE EDITOR'S DIARY.

As Our Cousins Behold Us.

READERS of THE REVIEW are aware that we have never manifested excessive enthusiasm over professions of friendliness to this country by our English relations; to our ears such protestations have sounded hollow and insincere, and they have been made, seemingly, only at times when America's apparent favor would serve Britain's political purposes in dealing with other Powers. While holding firmly, however, to this view as the lesson derived from rather close inquiry, we have given unqualified admiration to the excellence of the pretence. Of all of England's important public journals, but one has been openly antagonistic to this country since the aristocracy and the statesmen concluded that our good-will was worth catering for and, through their estimable king, made their determination known to the publicists of the upper middle class. True, that one—we refer to the famous "Saturday Review"—has not thriven upon its policy in comparison with its contemporaries, but it has possessed the knowledge that secretly it was cherished and that its opinions were shared by those whose favor it most ardently desired, and with that it has been content.

We have always felt that this shrewd journal voiced the true British spirit,—which we consider to be the spirit of selfishness and envy—and signs are now multiplying daily in apparent confirmation of the correctness of this opinion. Our cousins seem to think that we are in trouble, politically, socially, commercially, financially—as, indeed, we are—and that the time for giving vent to sentiments hitherto restrained is consequently propitious. Hence the recent avalanche of censorious expressions from the great daily journals of London and the resumption by weekly reviews of the sneering attitude formerly affected. An aggravated,

though in our view not in the least aggravating, instance is afforded by the well-known and representative literary periodical called the "Academy," which publishes, over the signature of Mr. Arthur Machen, the following interesting summary of articles apparently published previously:

"Readers of the 'Academy' may remember my very inadequate attempt to depict the horrible body of death, decay and wickedness which is called the United States of America. Briefly, I showed, from American evidence and from unchallenged reports, that (1) the whole judicial system of America had fallen into contempt; (2) that it was corrupt; (3) that its proceedings, as in the Thaw trial, were in the highest degree degraded, offensive, and abominable; (4) that its ordinary police methods, as in the case of Signor Caruso, lately honored by King Edward VII, were beneath the standard of Hottentots; (5) that in Chicago, for example, the magistrates and the police were brigands and thieves in league with thieves; (6) that when a poor man, without money to bribe the loathsome press and the more loathsome judge, was executed, he was killed with hideous and revolting tortures; (7) that the deficiencies of American 'justice' were supplied by the kerosene-can of the obscene Judge Lynch; (8) that a peculiarly savage and abominable form of slavery was actually engineered by legal officers; (9) that all the municipalities of America are corrupt, and (10) frequently depend on enforced bribes from brothels; (11) that children are held to industrial slavery; (12) that the condition of the poor is unspeakably wretched and far worse than in any other country; (13) that the Legislatures are corrupt; (14) that every kind of noisome and poisonous adulteration flourishes together with (15) a host of peculiarly squalid, silly and mischievous impostures known as 'new religions.'"

There is no call for extended comment upon these somewhat vehement statements; the separation of those which, in any sense, or to any degree, are warranted from those that are not can be readily made by the most casual of observers. It is not true, of course, on the one hand, that our courts are corrupt or have fallen into contempt, while, on the other, it is a fact deeply regretted that the proceedings in the specific trial referred to were indeed most distasteful. Whether the manners of the singer mentioned merited rebuke or approbation is a question of taste. The Americans take one view, the English the other, and the two judgments are irreconcilable; but therein we find no cause for quarrel. The remaining points in the indictment are matters partly of opinion and partly of fact; for some, we sadly admit, there is too much justification; for others, none whatever. The reference to "new

religions" we do not understand; the only new religion, so called, that has come under our notice in recent years is that promulgated in England by an English preacher; and, so far from its being squalid or silly, we found much in it that was appealing and likely to prove helpful.

But it is provocative of ill-nature and unkindliness to discuss assertions that seem unwarrantably severe, and we have no intention of doing so; our sole purpose now is to present an indication of what we have long considered to be the real attitude of the Briton of high class towards Americans of whatever walk in life. We do not resent it; indeed, strictures that are deserved may well be brought to our attention for our own good, and exaggeration or vindictiveness never offers adequate cause for offence to properly balanced minds. The only point we would make relates to our own attitude towards other peoples. Let it be not influenced by hypocritical professions or sentimental racial appeals in one direction, or by futile and unworthy resentment in another; let it be the same to all men and to all nations, forbearing, generous, modest as befits youth, yet properly insistent upon recognition of real worth, and, most important of all, as free from entanglements of whatever nature as the fathers, if living, could wish the great Republic to remain.

On the Proper Conduct of Funerals.

WE would not deny the gravity of death; it is a quite serious matter even to those of us who, while conscious of, or at least admitting, no really sinful performances in the past, would nevertheless, if pressed, confess to certain minor indiscretions which we would be only too willing to join with the Lord in forgetting. Nevertheless, if form or ceremony or general interest be considered the criterion, dying is one of the most popular things one can do. Nobody goes to see a man born, but the entire community turns out to see him buried. Indeed, it is well known that many people, perhaps a majority, derive actual enjoyment from beholding with their own eyes life flicker out of a person's body. The almost universal satisfaction found, from time immemorial, in witnessing a hanging we can understand; the event is more spectacular and less expensive than a circus, possesses grisly human interest to a distinctive degree, is pre-

sumably grimly just and, in any case, is unpreventable. If the hanging is to take place anyway, why shouldn't we see it? That is the reasoning,—and it seems good enough if one cares for that variety of sport. But we could never understand why old women should, as they unquestionably do, love to attend funerals, or how anybody could be induced, except as a matter of duty, to make a business or profession of the handling of corpses.

We have often wondered how it would seem to be an undertaker. Although no other trade seems quite so gruesome, there are many we can imagine more distasteful. Indeed, the really proficient undertaker, while notoriously considerate and even ostentatiously patient in dealing with those whom he classifies in a broad professional way as "the bereaved," nevertheless bears himself in a manner singularly proud, and so affords the most nearly perfect example to be found anywhere of an harmonious blending in a personality of haughtiness and humility. Physically he conveys the impression of unhealthiness; his liver in particular always seems to have been making injudicious secretions; but this is a condition inseparable, doubtless, from the nature of his work. What can be reasonably expected of the liver of a man whose business it is to maintain constantly a mournful mien? Exercise, too, is beyond the pale of his consideration. Who ever saw an undertaker playing tennis or even so deadly a game as golf? How could one given to such practices hope to retain the custom of the elite? He may with propriety, it is true, attend divine service; but to one constantly engaged in semi-participation in similar rites, the relaxation to be obtained under even the most shocking ministrations must necessarily be limited. Indeed, the most casual observation confirms the suspicion of the futility of this method of securing relief. We have seen undertakers in church many times, but never one awake; their very familiarity with death seems to blunt their consciousness of the presence of souls within their own bodies and the desirability of arranging to have them saved. Gradually they come to regard themselves as apart from other men,—and so, perhaps, they are, as a sexton is or a hangman.

Of the undertaker's home life we know practically nothing. Does he preserve the official demeanor through meals, and at other times when free to mingle with the family? Does he romp with his children? Does he even have children? Would it be

proper for an undertaker's wife to fetch such obvious distractions into the world? What, we wonder, would be the view of our Chief Magistrate upon that point? And, as a matter of fact, did any one ever hear of the son or daughter of an undertaker? That progeny is not uncommon to executioners we know, because in the old days the business, then more profitable than it is now, was kept in the family through many generations. Whether a like thrifty spirit animates the undertaking clans we cannot say, but if so it would be interesting to know whether a male child is taught to subdue his emotions from the beginning and forced, perchance, to wear black mitts in the cradle. It is doleful to be unable to pass on to interested readers authentic data respecting the inner life of the undertaker, but partial compensation is found in the revelation of the outward aspects of his existence and of his attitude towards humanity contained in a sadly fascinating book now lying before us, written by a distinguished member of the craft, decorously clad and entitled "The Funeral."

It is a suggestive and comprehensive work, comprising four distinct parts, viz., (1) The Undertaker, (2) The Minister, (3) The Bereaved and (4) the Friends.

That the undertaker should be accorded first place in the book is but natural, since obviously the writer regards him as the central figure and best fitted to withstand successfully the glaring rays of publicity. But, while he should not shun duty, he must not seek business. "Like a modest damsel," says the mentor, "he is to wait until called. Any attempt on his part to bid for the privilege of caring for a body is vulgarity." Although he does not say so explicitly, we are confident that our instructor would disapprove of manifestations of exceptional interest in the precise condition of a sick person or undue promptitude in the use of the telephone upon receipt of information that dissolution had taken place. Not that the undertaker should disregard the business aspects of his calling. No. "He should make money, but he should make it decently; he should advertise in legitimate ways, but to contest for work like cab-drivers is disgraceful; let the work seek the undertaker, not the undertaker the work." The work having found him sitting, like a modest damsel, in his shop door, he must manifest "responsive tenderness," whether he feels it or not, "for the sake of policy"; *i. e.*, as we construe it, in order to insure subsequent orders from related sources. For

the same reason, he should give personal attention to the singers, whose comfort is so often neglected. "In the opinion of the writer, it would be a paying investment for the undertaker to furnish free of charge, if necessary, a carriage for the accommodation of the singers; it would add greatly to the undertaker's popularity and ultimately to his business."

The ideal undertaker is progressive; "the world moves"; so must he. "That undertaker who is content to follow antiquated customs and willing to abide forever in old ruts is no credit, but rather a disgrace, to his profession." And yet he must not be unduly insistent. "If the bereaved are positively set in their ideas, it will be difficult for the undertaker to effect any change, and it may be a decided mistake to attempt it. Tact must decide." How true this simple dictum seems in view of the blunders of which we are all cognizant,—such, for example, as the inconsiderate announcement of an undertaker who, having relieved the distressed widow by promising to attend to the wig on the head of the deceased, afterwards informed her with a smirk of satisfaction that she need feel no further apprehension, as he had tacked it on. Even though the operation did seem necessary and was, of course, harmless, how tactless such an observation at such a time!

The Minister is regarded by our author as an unsatisfactory assistant. True, "a successful minister is usually a very busy man and cannot be expected to give himself in a spiritual way to funeral reforms"; nevertheless, he should forego the use of "antiquated methods" and "by practising modern and correct customs" cooperate with the undertaker. He should take care, too, that his remarks be appropriate. Under no circumstances should he "attempt to preach a departed to heaven, regardless of the life he had lived"; even "to conduct the service of a notoriously bad person and ask the choir to sing 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus' is hardly the proper thing." Briefly, says the undertaker, people should not be led to believe that a man can live like a devil and die like a saint.

Much is said, and well said, respecting the arrangement of the physical details of the ceremony; thoughtfulness, consideration, tact, are heavily drawn upon, although it is doubtful whether the keenest foresight could provide for every contingency. There was, for instance, the sad case of the man who, having buried

his wife successfully, complained at the store in the evening that his having been obliged to ride to the graveyard with his mother-in-law had "spoilt the whole day" for him. Fortunately, such unhappy incidents are so rare that our author does not perceive the necessity of considering them. Each general situation he treats comprehensively and with delicacy; exceptions he leaves to the individual.

The Friends are dealt with somewhat summarily. They are urged to exhibit no vulgar curiosity, and are warned, in particular, that, "if engaged by the bereaved to sit up with the body of the departed, they should not make a picnic of the occasion, since laughing and joking, and otherwise offending the feelings of the bereaved, is exceedingly bad manners."

So the helpful little book ends. One more decorous itself or more completely given to the cause of decorum we have never read. In but a single instance is there the slightest departure from the prevailing tone. "If a person is never seen in a church on ordinary occasions, he should never be seen there on a funeral occasion, unless the funeral be his own," may be based upon sound judgment; but it seems somewhat suggestive of flippant satire hardly becoming the treatment of a subject shrouded in solemnity. In view of the fact, however, that in the multiplicity of directions to all participants, from the man who tolls the bell to the boys who hitch up the teams, this is the only sign of a hint, respecting seemly conduct, to the departed, the slighting nature of the allusion may well be regarded as pardonable. With all other conclusions of the writer we find ourselves in complete accord.

The Selection of a Husband.

BECAUSE it is the duty of every woman to marry some man, it by no means follows that she is deprived of the privilege of making acute discrimination; on the contrary, to fulfil her mission as completely as possible, she should exercise the greatest care in selecting a mate. Time was when she had no say in the matter, and in some countries she has little or none to-day; but in this happily civilized land she still possesses, and will undoubtedly hold for all time, the right first to choose and then ensare. It is a noble prerogative,—one, in our judgment, that should be appreciated and cherished above all others. And yet, as we have ob-

served, it should be exercised with caution. Let nothing be left to chance, as Plato would have had it when he decreed that pairing should be done by lot; while not over-nice, be at least particular, in order that the one chosen may feel honored by the distinction conferred upon him, and so be the more readily induced to show his undying gratefulness.

Much that was thought and written years ago on how to choose a wife was good enough for the time, but the recent reversal of the relative attitudes of seeker and sought renders it valueless. Nevertheless, despite the fact that, in considering the points to be heeded and the precautions to be observed by womankind, we find ourselves in a fallow field, certain general principles may be regarded as established. It is best, for example, to capture a husband while he is still young, docile and plastic. Preferably also he should be in love. He may then be trained after the manner best calculated to serve the convenience of her for whom thenceforth he must and should toil.

Under no circumstances would we, if a woman, unless a widow, marry a bachelor past forty years of age, and we should look askance at one approaching thirty-five. Such an one, however ingratiating in appearance and demeanor, is not only invariably trying, but actually hopeless, and only too frequently commits suicide on the honeymoon, to the intense annoyance of the bride. Nor would we—again, unless a widow, of course—select a philosopher or a writer of essays upon the proper conduct of life and kindred disagreeable topics. Such as they know too much that is not true and are prone to build in imagination absurd theories and then insist upon their being put into practice. Here now is our delightful Mr. Benson admitting that he is anxious to be chosen, but obstinately declaring that his marriage must be the climax of a romance, of a great passion which he is satisfied cannot be the result of reflection. “One cannot argue oneself into it,” he adds, “one must be carried away.” And he forty-five and looking it!

Hardly less distasteful were the requirements of the learned Gibbon, who, at forty-seven, wrote from Lausanne to the Right Honorable Lady Sheffield in this characteristic strain:

“An excellent house, a good table, a pleasant garden, are no contemptible ingredients in human happiness. The general style of society hits my fancy; I have cultivated a large and agreeable circle of acquaintance, and I am much deceived if I have not laid the foundations

of two or three more intimate and valuable connections; but their names would be indifferent, and it would require pages, or rather volumes, to describe their persons and characters.

"With regard to my standing dish, my domestic friend, I could not be much disappointed, after an intimacy of eight-and-twenty years. His heart and his head are excellent; he has the warmest attachment for me, he is satisfied that I have the same for him: some slight imperfections must be mutually supported; two bachelors, who have lived so long alone and independent, have their peculiar fancies and humors, and when the mask of form and ceremony is laid aside, every moment in a family life has not the sweetness of the honeymoon, even between husbands and wives who have the truest and most tender regard for each other.

"Should you be very much surprised to hear of my being married? Amazing as it may seem, I do assure you that the event is less improbable than it would have appeared to myself a twelvemonth ago. Deyverdun and I have often agreed, in jest and in earnest, that a house like ours would be regulated, and graced, and enlivened by an agreeable female companion; but each of us seems desirous that his friend should sacrifice himself for the public good. Since my residence here I have lived much in women's company; and, to your credit be it spoken, I like you the better the more I see of you. Not that I am in love with any particular person. I have discovered about half a dozen wives who would please me in different ways, and by various merits: one as a mistress (a widow, vastly like the Eliza; if she returns I am to bring them together); a second, a lively entertaining acquaintance; a third, a sincere good-natured friend; a fourth, who would preside with grace and dignity at the head of my table and family; a fifth, an excellent economist and housekeeper; and a sixth, a very useful nurse."

It is pretty writing and probably not too seriously meant, but yet how indicative of the utterly selfish and calculating spirit of the bachelor in the forties! Assuredly, the erudite Gibbon and the crotchety Deyverdun would have liked a woman to attend to their household affairs, but each preferred that the other take the chance of assuming a burden; and, however prudent a wife thus obtained might have proven to be, we may be certain that her advent would have been attributed to human prescience and that she would not be regarded as coming, as the Scriptures truly say, "direct from the Lord." And yet the pompous Gibbon should have known better. Twenty-odd years before, while still capable of feeling human emotion, he had fallen in love really and truly with the Lausanne minister's daughter, Susanne Curchod, and would have married her but for his father's disapproval; but self-interest prevailed and he let the beautiful girl go to become the wife of

Necker and the mother of Mme. de Staël. Doubtless the melancholy aspect of the great man's autobiography is due largely to his subsequent feeling of aggrievement at having deprived himself, by excessive caution, of a most desirable companionship.

But it is ever so with men who have passed forty unsubdued by domestic discipline; their flagrant demands invariably exceed the bounds of reason. Observe Gibbon's requirements: a mistress, a lively acquaintance, a good-natured friend, a dignified head of the table, a frugal housekeeper, and a useful nurse, all moulded into one feminine form. The enormity of the requisition becomes quickly apparent when we stop to think and realize that even few men possess so many qualifications in abundance. Indeed, if the truth be told, we can think of but two or three now living.

In all fairness, however, it must be confessed that the learned one betrayed an appreciation, somewhat humorous, of his own absurdities, having the grace finally to add to his letter:

“ Could I find all these qualities united in a single person, I should dare to make my addresses, and should deserve to be refused.”

Of his rightful deserts in such a contingency there can be no question, but in point of fact, of course, there was no need of apprehension, for the simple reason that such a female person never lived, and if she had and Gibbon had found her, he would have invented and demanded additional qualifications for the winning of his favor.

Mr. Benson is less explicit, but quite as exacting. How can a man, silly enough to have lived singly for forty-five years, expect to feel the “ grand passion ” and be “ carried away ”? Simple observation should have taught him what has been beaten into the heads of many of us by bitter experience, viz.: that it is contrary to some irrefragable law of nature to fall in love after forty. One may, of course, continue to hold to the very grave the inestimable blessing previously acquired; but that which, after twoscore, a gentleman of the present day considers a recrudescence of love is really no more than a blending of mawkish sentiment, growing out of passing fancy, with regard for creature comforts, derived from habits of self-indulgence. Of such male persons we say emphatically to all women, except widows, Beware! in no wise, however, disavowing our previous declarations to the effect that if none better can be had, the narrow path of duty lies straight and plain before the searching eyes of every living spinster.

The Theory and Practice of Osculation.

ORIGINALLY, kissing was a form of mere salutation, corresponding to the custom among the Esquimaux of rubbing noses. Thus, in the very olden days, it seemed to many a seemly and even pious act to kiss the feet of idols, just as even now millions would rejoice in the opportunity—after the modern manner, of course—to kiss the toe of the Pope. St. Paul extended this phase of the ceremony by inventing and enjoining the “holy kiss,” or kiss of charity, signifying Christian love and brotherhood. So far as we have been able to learn, this method of presenting evidence of fellowship served satisfactorily while confined to the brethren; but gradual, and apparently not unwilling, participation in it by the sisters gave rise to uncertainties in the minds of so many husbands of selfish disposition that the practice was long ago discontinued, and is now never observed, except under an unusual stress of circumstance, or when a peculiarly plausible pretext can be found. As a matter of fact, the kiss prescribed by the Apostle was as harmless a thing as the kisses of Arabian women upon the beards of their male relatives; but, as the requirements of the times became less rigorous, the distance between cheek or forehead and lips seemed to shorten, and abandonment of the pretty custom became necessary, for reasons which we need not recount, since they may be readily supplied by intelligent and experienced readers of both sexes.

But it is not the kiss as a symbol of friendship or respect, or even of such abject submission as is referred to by David in his well and favorably known psalm telling how it is well for certain undesirable citizens to “lick the dust,” that we deem worthy of consideration at this time. Indeed, we should as soon think of endeavoring to deduce a moral from a shake of the hand or a wag of the ear by one of the few known to be gifted with the capacity to practise that accomplishment. That which formerly fascinated us, we admit frankly, and to this day possesses an interest which we suspect to be shared by many, is the kiss upon the lips by reputable members of the opposite sexes—such, for example, as Jacob lifted up his voice and wept over, on first meeting Rachel, when, having rolled away the stone so that her sheep might reach the water, he took his reward after the pleasing manner of his kind of those primitive days.

The notorious and reprehensible conduct of historians in

neglecting matters of real importance to the human race is responsible for our lack of information respecting the precise time when the nature of the kiss insensibly changed from perfunctoriness to something more vital and worth while; but, apparently, the evolution was completed early in the seventeenth century. At any rate, the most observing of Frenchmen who thrived at the end of the sixteenth century bemoaned the fact that promiscuity had rendered "of no esteem" the kisses which Socrates had pronounced "so powerful and dangerous for stealing hearts"; whereas, only twenty-five years later, Doctor Heylin, making his interesting "Survaye of France," recorded his indignation at the incivility of the ladies in turning away from kindly proffers of salutation, and added in true British fashion his own belief that "the chaste and innocent kiss of an English gentlewoman is more in heaven than their best devotions." We should hesitate to question the exactitude, even as to adjectives, of one so highly reputed for accuracy as the learned doctor, but his disappointment—even chagrin, perhaps—may be appreciated when we recall the fact that simultaneously Erasmus was writing from England to his friend Andrelinus, somewhat enthusiastically, in this wise:

"If, Faustus, thou knewest the advantages of England, thou wouldst run hither with winged feet, and if the gout would not suffer that, thou wouldst wish thyself a Dædalus. For, to name one among many, here are girls with divine countenances, bland and courteous, and whom thou wouldst readily prefer to thy Muses. And, besides, there is a custom which can never be sufficiently praised; for, if you visit anywhere, you are dismissed with kisses; if you return, those sweet things are again divided; wherever you go, you are abundantly kissed. In short, move which way you will, all things are full of delight."

We perceive, therefore, that France, as usual, established this fashion of regarding promiscuous osculation by even bland and courteous ladies as improper, if not, indeed, immodest, at least in public; but the dissatisfaction of England at being compelled to heed the decorous dictum of the true arbiter is clearly evidenced to this day by the more responsive attitude of her own daughters when reasonably assured of immunity from discovery.

But, however interesting may be the history of transition in national characteristics, it can be only dull and even tiring in

comparison with consideration of a topic, not only so fascinating in itself, but so suggestive of related subjects and so helpful in a constant endeavor to point out to the human race the way of advancement along rational and practicable lines. So we revert, with a certain sense of relief and anticipatory joy, to reflections upon the theory and practice to which allusion has been made in our simple title.

To begin with, then, at the beginning: Is kissing a necessity or a luxury? Is it beneficial or harmful? Under what circumstances, to what extent, and by whom should it be indulged? And why, among those presumably capable of and responsible for the shaping of our common destiny, has it received so small a percentage of the attention which all of us not unfamiliar with its certain delights and probable consequences fully realize that it deserves?

Clearly, custom plays a large part in the determination of these problems. The marriage service does not impose the specific osculatory obligation upon either party to the contract; but nobody would question for a moment the implied right of each to kiss the other at suitable moments, and in a manner, of course, not inconsistent with the maintenance of the dignity of both. Although, we may safely assume, in a large majority of cases the practice has not been wholly neglected during the period of courtship, there is general tacit recognition of an abrupt change taking place in the quality or flavor, if we may so term it, of the caress simultaneously with the exchange of marital vows. Indeed, no engraving is more popular, particularly in our rural communities, than that of the tired and tearful bride receiving from the groom a salutation of the variety commonly described as "melting," as the minister and parents ostentatiously disappear through the doorway. In France, where young persons are permitted far less freedom than in America or even in England, the picture is truthfully labelled "The First Kiss"; but here the difference in condition is recognized by the substitution of "Wedded Bliss," or, as if spoken or breathed, "Mine!" and, in rare instances, "All Mine!"

It is in this hint of possession that we detect the underlying cause of the change in quality or flavor; probably at no other moment, either before or afterward, are necessity and luxury so happily blended. From that time forward, even among the

best-regulated and least-fashionable families, the caress, as an inevitable consequence of frequency and easy acquisition, gradually simmers down to an inoffensive but somewhat perfunctory evidence of friendliness. It by no means follows that this fact implies reproach; on the contrary, evolution in any other direction, especially toward a display of more ardent emotion, would be in flat opposition to the laws of nature, and consequently abnormal.

A further distinction, involving partial reversion to the earlier type, often arises from the decease of one of the partners, usually the husband; but it may be accepted as a certainty that the savor peculiar to the original participation can never be wholly regained. A more apt illustration or more conclusive confirmation of this unhappy truth could not be desired than that contained in the appellations bestowed upon the products of his art by the most famous of concocters of beverages designed to induce a quickening of the appetite. Of the two mixtures from whose invention he derived the highest satisfaction, one he called "The Maiden's Prayer"; the other was designated as "The Widow's Delight." Both were, and continue to be, according to current reports, deservedly popular; but the significance of the delicate differentiation and the certainty that even to the untutored mind a reversal of the terms would have seemed preposterous tend greatly to clarify our sufficiently explicit, yet necessarily somewhat vague, assertion respecting the constantly varying quality of the kiss as a consequence of changing conditions. We suspect, moreover, that the essentials to full appreciation of osculatory favors differ correspondingly; the ingredients, for example, composing that which the artist felicitously termed a "maiden's prayer," while sufficing in early life, in later years seeming insipid and inadequate as compared with the richer combination of elements comprised in a "widow's delight." Either would be regarded, of course, as a luxury. Indeed, broadly speaking, we may safely assume that only such kisses as convention decrees that we may and should have at will fall within the realm of necessity; all others, although in widely varying degrees, are indeed luxuries.

Whether kissing should be regarded as beneficial or harmful depends largely upon the point of view from which the subject is considered. In a strictly selfish sense, a nice balance, probably,

should be struck between the spiritual gain and the physical injury; but it is a grave question whether for any reason we are justified in withholding pleasure from others of a sex whose chief craving is for sympathy. To this extent we may agree with the physicians, that osculation should be confined to those of approximately the same ages; the indiscriminate kissing of babies, keenly susceptible to attacks from germs of all kinds, and the fondling of young women by old men and of young men by old women, are practices not only offensive in themselves, but unjust in the sense of depriving others of their just dues. We know of but one instance of happiness, though of a mitigated kind, having been secured through abstinence from kissing. That was the case of a lady who married a man who had a bad breath, and who went to her grave, conscious, of course, of the suffering she had undergone from such hateful contact, but quite unaware that her situation was in any way peculiar, as she supposed to her dying day that all men's breaths were offensive. Inasmuch as the poor lady probably could not have divorced the wretch for such a cause, it may perhaps be urged that she profited from her ignorance; but we have never heard any boasting more absurd than that of her relatives over so rare an example of perfect chastity. As a matter of fact, of course, the unfortunate lady's exceptional ignorance merely evidenced her unattractiveness; because, surely, nobody will insist that a comely female, wed or unwed, deaf, dumb or blind, ever passed through life in such utter darkness.

That kissing in moderation among those of like ages and dispositions involves no great risk may be considered established; else it would not have been invented and authorized by Holy Writ. The difficulty lies in acting within reasonable restrictions, but this is common to all fascinating practices; and the sure way to rout a total abstainer from any cause of enjoyment is to hurl Horace at his head, thus:

*“Insani sapiens nomen ferat, aequus iniqui,
Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petit ipsam,”*

or, as we would say:

*“Mad grow the wise, the just unjust are found,
When e'en to virtue they prescribe no bound.”*

In such matters, those who desire to live rightly without depriving themselves unnecessarily of any form of enjoyment may

well take home Paul's admonition to the Romans: "Be not wiser than you should, but be soberly wise." Heed paid to this sagacious injunction will prevent one from going very far along the wrong road, while simultaneously permitting suitable gratification of human impulses.

Why osculation has received so little attention from wise men we cannot tell. It may be that thinking and kissing go not well together; if so, few of us would require long time to choose between them. Or, possibly, the subject has seemed to require too delicate handling; or it may have seemed trifling. We neither know nor care. The most valuable practical lesson to be derived from experience and now set down is that closing of the eyes is essential to perfection in kissing. Aside from this hint to those of congenial spirit, we would merely direct the attention of those who may decry the importance of the topic to the influence of the charm in retaining hold upon one worth keeping, and rendering less frequent and hazardous those absences which are only too likely to make the heart grow fonder—of some one else.